

PUBLIC HEALTH

ALWAYS WORKING FOR A SAFER AND

HEALTHIER WASHINGTON



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The Policy View From Olympia

King County Overweight Prevention Initiative Forum
October 14, 2005

Indicators of an Epidemic

- Obesity rates have doubled over the last decade.
- More than half of all Washington State residents are obese or overweight.
- Rates of chronic disease and disabling conditions that are associated with poor diet and lack of exercise continue to escalate year after year.

Indicators of an Epidemic, cont.

- Rocketing medical costs for obesity-related diseases are crippling Washington State's ability to provide affordable health care coverage.
- The population over 65-years-old in Washington is increasing faster than in many other states.

How do we get from situations like:

- The consequences of no sidewalks

CANINE CONSTITUTIONAL



Wes Barrett/Outpost

A brisk walk in the park keeps Macey II in shape between dog shows. His owner, Columbus resident Cathy Stumbo, got up early

to give her 3-year-old Doberman his regular workout. They typically jog 15 miles in Berlinet Park.

- To changing norms with equal opportunity for health to everyone

24
HOUR

FITNESS

FITNESS

24
HOUR

POINT
HALL
TO
LOCK
24

Our Vision:

WASHINGTON STATE NUTRITION & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PLAN



POLICY & ENVIRONMENTAL APPROACHES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

JUNE 2003

Why our story is getting attention:

- Intentional planning
- Use of coalitions
- Integrative work across programs and agencies
- Focus on policy and environmental change

Determinants of Health

Multiple levels of influence

- **Genetic and biological processes**
- **Individual behaviors and lifestyle**
- **Environments in which people live**



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Determinants of Health

Access to Health Care – 10%

= 30%

Environment – 20%

Genetics – 20%

Health Behaviors – 50%

Safe and
supportive
surroundings

= 50%

Healthy
behaviors

Years of healthy life
Perceived mental health
Readiness to learn

Social Environments and Health

Individuals and families are embedded within social, political, and economic systems that shape behaviors and constrain access to resources necessary to maintain health.

Greater emphasis is needed on public health interventions that involve communities, with the goal of collectively identifying resources, needs and solutions...

Institute of Medicine, Health and Behavior 2001

The Spectrum of Prevention

Influencing Policy & Legislation

Changing Organizational Practices

Fostering Coalitions & Networks

Educating Providers

Promoting Community Education

Strengthening Individual Knowledge & Skills

Importance of Collective Policy Development

- Emerging Role of the Nutrition and Physical Activity Policy Leadership Group
- Policy platform now being created

Importance of Policy Implementation

– Recent Bills

- SB 5436 – school policy
- SB 5186 – physical activity and planning

Key Program Efforts – Local Focus

- STEPS: Steps to a Healthier Washington
- The Healthy Communities Pilot Projects

Lessons Learned

- Scattered approaches to policy development not most efficient
- Local (grass roots) activism needed to identify and make changes at all levels
- Coalition-building is proven and necessary method for moving policy agendas

Challenges

- Accounting for disparate health impacts
- Finding sustainable funding
- Best practices still emerging
- Legitimizing preventive care in health care and employment settings
- Policy change is a political process
- Policymaker focus still geared to individual and family choices (especially kids)

The State Role: What's Ahead?

- Clear commitment by the public health community (at all levels) to work in the various policy realms
- Creation of partnerships that include sectors generally unfamiliar to public health (transportation, parks & recreation, planning, agriculture, segments of the food and business community)

Rare Opportunity Now in Place to Create a “Healthier Washington”

- Part of Governor’s Health Initiative
- Convergence of public, media, public health & policymaker interest in chronic disease prevention, most notably ***nutrition and physical activity***

Take Home Messages

- Support policy approaches that relate to state NPA Plan objectives and Governor's health priorities
- No magic solutions – need comprehensive approaches
- Prevention works – we can create a “Healthier Washington”

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